

HOLY VESSELS



A LENTEN SEASON OF RECOVERY

***Calvary Lutheran Church
Lenten Services***

**Holy Vessels: A Lenten Season of Recovery
March 3, 2021
*“Stories”***

‡AS WE GATHER‡

Each of us is created a precious and holy vessel of embodied love. We have been through a harrowing time since last Lent that has shattered our sense of wholeness—body, mind, and spirit—like a glass vessel fractured into pieces. Let us enter this Lenten “season of recovery” focusing on Jesus, our healer.

Prelude Music and Time for Silent Reflection

Those who collect beach glass often become “archeologists”—seeking out any markings or clues as to the story of the original piece. It often takes much time to bring out the truth behind it. This week we acknowledge the power of truth-telling as a healing property. There are stories that have shaped our lives, leaving us without the ability to see who we truly are in the eyes of God and leaving us without the ability to speak the depth of our stories of struggle. We focus on the importance of recovery of mental health, reclaiming our sense of who we are and being able to proclaim new redemptive stories of divine worth.

Prayer of Confession

Let us acknowledge our need to restore, repair, renew our Holy Vessels, and that the health of our minds deeply affects our physical and spiritual health.

Let us pray:

Centering and Calming Divine Breath of God,

You gifted us with amazing minds, capable of so many things.

You gave us the ability to think and feel,

imbuing us with discernment of thought and emotion.

Like our physical bodies, sometimes this aspect of our selves is beleaguered.

We struggle under the strain of disappointment, despair, and delusion.

Too often we hide this, afraid of what others might think of our difficulties in managing or moving forward, even in the face of devastating circumstances.

Too often we perpetuate the stigma of a less-than-perfect state of mind by shaming ourselves and others.

Millennia of misunderstanding compounds our fear.

We label and belittle, all the while turning the hatred upon ourselves, for no one is immune from troubles of the mind at some point.

**So many are suffering now, God,
weary and distraught, grieving and at the end of their rope.
We cannot fathom the proportions of loss and so we look away,
sometimes even from the need in our own community.**

**Help us, Healer.
Show us our capacity for compassion.
Forgive our inattention.
Move us to move
one step at a time toward greater care for one another.**

In this time of silence, we acknowledge and confess our yearning
for forgiveness, healing and wholeness.

Silence

Hymn:

“We Come to You for Healing, Lord”

**ELW #617
vv. 1**

**We come to you for healing, Lord, of body, mind, and soul,
and pray that by your Spirit’s touch we may again be whole.**

Assurance of Forgiveness

Know this: You are accepted.

No. Matter. What.

Accepting the truth of our difficulties is part of the journey of recovery.

Sharing our stories of difficulty can open the way for healing.

For you, for me, for all.

Take a deep breath in to let this truth fill you...
and breathe out with the relief of assurance.

‡A READING FROM GOD’S WORD‡

Matthew 9:27-33

As Jesus went on from there, two blind men followed him, crying loudly, “Have mercy on us, Son of David!” When he entered the house, the blind men came to him; and Jesus said to them, “Do you believe that I am able to do this?” They said to him, “Yes, Lord.” Then he touched their eyes and said, “According to your faith let it be done to you.”

And their eyes were opened. Then Jesus sternly ordered them, “See that no one knows of this.” But they went away and spread the news about him throughout that district. After they had gone away, a demoniac who was mute was brought to him. And when the demon had been cast out, the one who had been mute spoke; and the crowds were amazed and said, “Never has anything like this been seen in Israel.”

The Gospel of the Lord
Thanks be to God

Sermon:

Pastor Chris

(Silence for reflection and meditation)

Hymn:

“Healer of Our Every Ill”

**ELW #612
vv.1&2**

Refrain: **Healer of our ev'ry ill,
light of each tomorrow,
give us peace beyond our fear,
and hope beyond our sorrow.**

**1. You who know our fears and sadness,
grace us with your peace and gladness;
Spirit of all comfort, fill our hearts.**

Refrain

**2. In the pain and joy beholding
how your grace is still unfolding,
give us all your vision, God of love.**

Refrain

Prayers of the People

Healer of our every ill,
we come before you to make our petitions known.
Hear our cries for healing of body, mind, and spirit.
We know that already you are at work among us,
showing us the way to recovery from the toxicities and grief of our time.
You have stamped each one of us as “worthy.”

We give you thanks that your mercy is wide
and your faithfulness to us not depend upon
having our feelings sorted out or our sense of well-being secure.
You are not waiting for us to “get our act together” before
offering us your love and grace.

We pray especially for those who have experienced
heightened and acute mental and emotional difficulties as a result
of this past year of isolation and fear.

We pray for those who feel far from hope
and we mourn those who could not find a lifeline to survive this hardship.
We pray for those who find themselves without access to adequate care,
someone to talk to, or appropriate resources to steady their hearts and minds.

We give thanks for those who are telling their stories,
showing us how to open our hearts to help others
and offering ripples of healing in the community.

We pray grateful thanks for progress toward holistic healthcare
and the efforts of all who are working to de-stigmatize mental illness,
making it easier to ask for, and get, the help so desperately needed.

We ask for courage and encouragement to re-evaluate
how we as a church can help now and into the future.

We pray this night for...

...and now as our Lord Christ taught us, we are bold to pray...

**Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name,
thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those who trespass against us;
and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory,
forever, and ever. Amen.**

Ritual Action for the Week

The words of Jesus we heard in this week’s healing story were “Do you believe I am able to do this?” Jesus’ question invites us to consider our own belief in transformation. He invites us to step into a renewed vision of our lives, to speak into being a new story, not be bound by the stories of the past, inscribed on us by others, that may be oppressing and limiting us.

Beach glass is usually somewhat cloudy when dry. When it comes into contact with water, it becomes clear and bright. Tonight, if you are worshiping with us at home you are invited to fill a vessel with water and place your piece in the water and watch the transformation. If you are with us in person, I invite you to do this when you get home. As you watch your piece of beach glass become clear and bright, let it be a prayer for clarity. Ask for a new way to see the struggles you may be experiencing.

Ask for understanding and a way forward.

Take a moment to think on this and then when you are ready, pick up the container with your glass piece, now bright and clear in the water, and breathe deeply, inviting the Spirit to live and move and transform you and others who need clarity for their lives. Keep the bowl in a place you will see it regularly this week... perhaps in a bathroom near the place where you shower or bathe.

And remember, you are a beloved child of God,
washed in the waters of baptism and no longer bound by your past.

Closing Hymn:

“Abide with Me”

**ELW #629
vv. 1,2&3**

**1. Abide with me, fast falls the eventide.
The darkness deepens; Lord, with me abide.
When other helpers fail and comforts flee,
help of the helpless, oh, abide with me.**

**2. Swift to its close ebbs out life's little day;
earth's joys grow dim, its glories pass away;
change and decay in all around I see;
O thou who changest not, abide with me.**

**3. I need thy presence ev'ry passing hour;
what but thy grace can foil the tempter's pow'r?
Who like thyself my guide and stay can be?
Through cloud and sunshine, oh, abide with me.**

Blessing for the Journey

This week the crowd was amazed and cried out that nothing like it had ever been seen before. How interesting that the crowd is “seeing” something for the first time, just like the blind man is brought to sight! Could it be that this is as important to the story as the ones who received physical healing? How could we open our eyes, figuratively, in new ways? What do we need to envision anew?

As you seek God's vision
go with confidence
that the One Who Is Living Water
is already cleansing, renewing, and clarifying our lives.
Go assured of the depth of God's love for each and every one of us;
And filled with the peace that passes all understanding.

May the words of Jesus ring in your ears:
"Do you believe it is possible?"

And may the Spirit hover, move, and deliver
salve to your soul
and a spring in your step.
Amen.

Postlude

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Hymns: We Come to You for Healing, Lord: Text: Herman G. Stuempfle Jr., b. 1923 Text © 2002 GIA Publications, Inc., 7404 S. Mason Ave., Chicago, IL 60638. www.giamusic.com. 800.442.3358. All rights reserved. Used by permission. OneLicense.net #A-705226; **Healer of Our Every Ill:** Text: Marty Haugen, b. 1950 Text © 1987 GIA Publications, Inc., 7404 S. Mason Ave., Chicago, IL 60638. www.giamusic.com. 800.442.3358. All rights reserved. Used by permission. OneLicense.net A-705226; **Abide with Me:** Text: Henry F. Lyte, 1793-1847 ©Public Domain

✠In Our Thoughts and Prayers✠

Prayers for healing: **Syl Holdt** (re-do knee surgery), **Greta Mehling** (health issues), **Ron Wegelin** (health issues), **Shirlie Schuldies** (health issues-mainly her heart), **Caleb Payne** (health issues), **Bruce** (Cancer treatments—friend of Jean Collins & Cathy Johnson), **Laynette Van Anne** (brain tumor—friend of Dee Brady), **LaDonna Schmidt** (colon cancer), **Bill Steele** (Recovering from COVID-19), **Beth Janecek** (Radiation), **Rich** (COVID-19 recovery—brother of Barb Gorr), **Cathy Rahrs** (rehab @ home), **Nancy & Tracy Steele** (COVID-19 health issues), **Harlan Meyer** (Lonnie Miller's uncle), **Reuben & Gloria Gorr** (health issues), **Alan** (recovery of vision—Kathy Randall's cousin), **Jordan Hein** (cancer treatment—former member of Calvary), **Julie** (cancer treatment—Travis Miller family), **Barb** (cancer—Marlene Downer's sister-in-law), **Joan** (cancer—niece of Marj Nikont), **Patty** (cancer—Jim Dorn's sister-in-law).

Prayers for our church, community, nation, and world: in this time of Covid-19 and general unsettledness. For everyone in need!